

## **BLENDED LEARNING. GAMIFICATION FOR BLENDED LEARNING**

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Looking at technology developments in the 21st century, we can see that rapid progress in other areas has also already started. The teaching process is not an exception, and it is also changing rapidly to keep up with the times. With the development of technologies, combined with the access to the Internet, there have evolved a number of distance education forms. And one of them is blended learning which is the combination of learning online with traditional setting.

Blended learning offers a lot advantages which make it become a more and more popular mode of learning:

1. Students are engaged with the materials as they have to do a lot of different assignments (watching videos, reading articles, taking quizzes, participating in the discussions).

2. Complex content topics can be presented in class, whereas additional materials are available online. Students can access the course at any convenient place and moreover at any convenient time unless the course is synchronous, then participants gather together at a set time. But despite some time limitations, such form of learning appeals to some course participants more as they do not get the feeling of isolation.

3. Peer assignments, discussion boards, commenting in online learning and face-to-face interaction do stimulate collaboration.

4. From the teacher's perspective it is less time-consuming when it comes to advancing students' knowledge as they can get a great deal of materials individually in the course and also it is much easier to evaluate students' performance.

5. Blended learning helps to involve a lot of participants at a time. The online component makes it be accessible by any number of participants and with a well-planned face-to-face facilitated strategy, the training can be efficiently delivered even to a broad audience.

6. Blended learning accommodates different learning styles and as most students have their own learning style, the target approach is more likely to cater to their needs and help each student achieve the necessary results.

E-learning has become incredibly popular and it is continually growing and as a result transforming into different forms, one of which is blended learning. To make learners more motivated and the learning process more interesting experience, blended learning environment is supported with gamification that is the application of game theory (rules of play, point scoring, competition with others) concepts and techniques to non-game activities.

Jane McGonigal, one of the keynote speakers of Educause conference, in her 2012 TEDGlobal talk pointed out, 'We like people better if we've played a game with them; we bond and build trust. And contrary to popular thinking, she

explains that games are not so much a tool for escapism but rather a way to use our best selves. Gamers are extremely productive and collaborative within the realm of a game.”

It should be noted that gamification is an important teaching and learning strategy and incorporating gamification into one’s blended learning course can increase participation, boost engagement and simply enhance the joy of learning.

#### Reference

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## FROM TEACHER TO FACILITATOR

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*"Of the best leader, when the job is done the people say 'we did it ourselves.' " – Lao Tzu in the Tao Te Ching*

When thinking of a person who helps to acquire new knowledge, competences, or skills, the first person who comes to our mind is a teacher. But even being a teacher we often have to edge over into different roles. In this paper, we are going to discuss the role shift, the skills needed to accomplish the change from a giver of information to a facilitator of learning,

First of all, we need to understand what actually a facilitator is, what their main responsibilities are. So, a facilitator is someone who engages in facilitation – in any activity that makes a process easier. A facilitator helps a group of people to work together, meet the necessary goals, accomplish what you have planned to do. They remain neutral on content, ensure balanced participation, encourage different points of view and guide the group to make decisions.

To see what makes a teacher and a facilitator different, let’s consider some of the examples:

- a teacher is in charge of the learning process, a facilitator is a guide to help people move through a process;
- a teacher is a content expert, a facilitator is not the source of knowledge, they draw opinions and ideas from group participants;
- a teacher decides what students should do, a facilitator asks participants what they would like to do;
- a teacher evaluates students, figures out how much students have learned, how well students have done, a facilitator lets the group evaluate themselves and figure out how well they have done;
- a group is usually seated in rows looking at the person (teacher) standing